

OCCASIONAL NOTES.



THE PUTRI OF MOUNT OPHIR.

The Dato' of Johol states. Putri GANDARÍA lives on Mount Ophir, but she often visits other territories, such as the watershed of the Gemencheh River.

She is seen by mankind under the following circumstances. Boatmen going down the stream will see a very ugly old woman on the bank. She has with her a cat, and slung over her shoulder is a small bag containing saffron.

The old woman shouts to the boatmen to stop and take her with them down stream. The boatmen seeing that she is old and ugly take no notice of her. In a moment the boat grounds on a sand-bank and the boatmen cannot get off again.

The old woman then cries "Let me get into the boat and all will be well." The boatmen agree, and the old woman gets into the boat. No sooner has she got in than the boat glides off down stream. They travel together for some time when the old woman says she wishes to land. The boatmen draw up to the bank and she lands, at the same time giving them each a piece of the saffron from her bag, which the instant it touches their hands turns into gold. At the same time the ugly old woman and her cat disappear.

This is how Putri GANDARÍA is seen by men, and to meet her does not forbode misfortune, but on the contrary is the signal of rare good luck.

She can transform her cat into a tiger, and people are afraid to hunt her out and molest her. The tradition is that if she is sought for or disturbed, she will certainly order her cat to assume the shape of a tiger, who will avenge her by devouring such obtrusive persons. Putri GANDARÍA does not live on the very summit of Gunong Lédang. I never heard of any one living there.

In Monsieur LEÓN JAUSSEN'S translation of GODINHO DE EREDIA'S "Account of Malacca," the Putri of Gunong Lédang is mentioned:—

" * * * * * Gunoledam, where lived the Enchantress 'Putry Raynha' a female Magician who in like manner to the Sorceress ERICHTHO the Thessalonian transformed, by virtue of certain plants, women into tigers, into birds or into other kinds of animals." And again:—

"According to a fable common amongst the Malays, the Queen Putri, wife of PERMICURI, the founder of Malacca, retired to the mountain and she lives there still having become immortal by means of magic art. Her dwelling place is on the summit of the mountain in a cavern, where she reclines on a couch formed of the bones of the dead and she shows herself in the shape of a beautiful young girl dressed in silk * * * * *"

The Dato' of Johol's version is probably the aboriginal version representing the Putri as an ugly old woman with a cat. GODINHO DE EREDIA'S version is the civilized Malay version treating the lady as young and beautiful and dressed in silk in accordance probably with the ideas in similar Arabic stories.

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DIAMONDS IN THE MALAY PENINSULA.

GARCIA DA ORTA in his *Aromatum Historia*, Lib. I, p. 171, treating of diamonds says:—"Alia est rupes ad fretum Tanjam in Malacæ tractu, quæ etiam de Rupe veteri cognominatos profert. Exigui quidem sunt sed laudati: unum tamen habent vitium quod ponderosi sint, quo nomine gratiores sunt venditoribus quam emptoribus."

"There is another rock at the Strait of Tanjam in the territory of Malacca, which produces [diamonds] of the class called old-rock diamond. They are few but valuable: however they have one fault, that they are heavy, wherefore they are more valued by the sellers than the buyers."